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THE NEED OF A RADICAL CHANGE

IN

THE TRAINING AND EDUCATION

OF

THE AMERICAN GIRL,

AND THE PHYSICIAN'S DUTY THEREIN.

BY

HAMILTON OSGOOD, M.D.,

BOSTON, MASS.

Read before the Annual Meeting of the Alumni Association, Jefferson Medical College, March 11, 1881.

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THE NEED OF A RADICAL CHANGE IN THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF THE AMERICAN GIRL, AND THE PHYSICIAN'S DUTY THEREIN.

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MR. PRESIDENT, FELLOW ALUMNI, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—In memory of the days when I came here a listener—days which I recall as among the happiest of my life—let me express my heartfelt pleasure in meeting you to-night, and give you sincere greeting in the name of *Auld Lang Syne*. Whenever we recall those days, in spite of any remembered thoroughness and conscientiousness in study, I think we cannot fail to realize that one element, which, for the most part, was beyond our outreaching thought of the future, was lacking. It was that profound sense of the responsibility of the physician, that keen appreciation of his duty to those whose health, whose happiness, whose *lives*, are largely in his hands. Perhaps this was but natural. The medical student but vaguely feels the meaning of his preparation. He must become a physician before his heretofore unreal sense of absolute duty takes shape and form. I wish it were not so. I wish medical education could include lessons of duty as actual, as real, as the necessity for familiarity with the course of an artery, with the first sound of the heart, with the breezy respiration of healthy lungs. But the medical college is only a primary school, in which merely the intellect and not the conscience of the student is developed. It is a place in which, like the squirrel or the bear, he stores up food for future assimilation. And so the student mind contains but raw material, its quality but unspun wooliness, until the day comes, when, leaders and teachers gone, books of no use, unless he have acquired the diagnostic faculty, the young doctor is left alone in self-dependence. It is then that the feeling of responsibility and the sense of duty begin to develop. The conscientious physician begins to see something beyond the mere need of diagnosis and ready relief. To achieve these is a noble life. But the true means of relief include more than drug, or pill, or plaster. Ills to which the flesh is heritor are so often the outgrowth of ill-doing, of wrong-headedness, of weak surrender to a caprice of fashion, of careless neglect or foolish pampering of a body which once was, and still should be, strong and vigorous, of growing indolence and of mistaken self-indulgence and intemperate misuse of the good things of this life, that the first step of a sensible and keen-sighted physician is to attack the cause, and absolutely refuse to administer a remedy until the unhealthful habit has been

abandoned. To do this often requires courage and persistent firmness. And the physician who, from lack of these qualities, or from personal motives, stifles his conscience and withholds truth and plain speaking where they alone are the need of the patient—he who writes a prescription and pockets the needed frankness with the undeserved fee—stultifies himself and loses an opportunity to win the respect and confidence of his patient. Tact he may and should use. To present a pin by its point is awkward, and may be irritating.

Plain speaking usually involves a certain amount of direct and personal criticism. But however bitter he may find the truth, the patient will respect the physician who speaks it with sincerity. On the contrary, if he find he has been consigned to the mercies of drugs when good advice was his real need, he will straightway condemn the man who, he feels, has not only deceived him but, perhaps, has defrauded him of the enjoyment of health. Let us, then, be frank and honest. Better lose a score of patients and fifty score fees annually, than once submit to the wrong-minded caprice of a patient, or once keep back the needed truth.

One of our native humorists used to lecture on "The Babes in the Woods," the lecture becoming notorious and perhaps amusing by the fact that no allusion was made to the babes. I do not mean to follow an example so original. But let me confess that I have not yet even mentioned the subject of my essay: The Need of a Radical Change in the Training and Education of the American Girl, and the Physician's Duty Therein.

When I sat down to write this paper, the need which my subject expresses was uppermost in my mind; but, at the first word, the final clause—"the physician's duty therein"—took precedence. For it is undeniable that it is largely through a higher sense of duty on the part of the physician that the needed change can be accomplished.

Need I tell you why a change, a radical change, in the education and training of our girls is necessary? Look at the young women of sixteen to twenty who pass us by hundreds as we walk the streets. Whether they be rich or poor, what is more rare than a finely formed girl, with firm step, bright eye and ruddy cheek? When these are lacking what is the reason of their absence? "The first observation of a European who comes to America," says

Dr. Clarke, in his "Sex in Education," "is that our women are a feeble race, and, if a physiological observer, he is sure to add: 'they will give birth to a feeble race, not only of women but of men as well.'" "I never saw so many pretty girls together," said Lady Amberley to Dr. Clarke, during a visit to a Boston school, and then remarked: "They all looked sick." At first thought does it not seem odd that the majority of our American boys are far more robust than an equal majority of girls? This certainly was not the intention of their Creator. Given two infants, a girl of ruddy health and a boy of only moderate strength. Give them the ordinary training of our boys and girls, and so follow these two beings up to the age of seventeen, and you have a vigorous, muscular lad, prompt and ever on the alert, and a frail-looking girl, gifted with intelligence and personal charm, but sensitive to fatigue, indisposed to movement, easily worried and unable to bear ordinary strain, unless it be to dance until four o'clock in the morning. For in this direction girls possess a most unaccountable endurance, but meanwhile, use up a vast amount of capital, which they are sure to find was only a forced loan.

The relative physical condition of the boy and the girl, you will observe, has become reversed. And I believe I am not overstating it when I say that this result occurs in at least seventy-five per cent. of cases. Indeed, it gives one a feeling of positive pleasure to see a girl of seventeen who looks, as she should, a picture of health. I look upon such an one almost as an American *lusus naturæ*. What, then, has occurred in the lives of this boy and girl, which has made the boy strong and healthful, the girl delicate and fragile? Can it be other than some mistake in the training and education of the girl?

From infancy to the days when children begin to walk and run out of doors, there is little or no difference in the care and training of the boy and girl. But sex soon becomes a factor, and from this time forward there enters into the manner of treating the two a growing dissimilarity, until the difference is strongly marked. The boy is expected to bear more exposure, harder knocks, more vigorous play, and of his own sweet will prefers the open air to the confinement of the house. So that, out of school hours, if you are seeking the average boy, you expect to find him where he should be, out of doors, at play. On the other hand, from a very early age, the girl is more carefully protected, not being thought able to bear the exposure which boys are unhesitatingly allowed to encounter. The slightest change of weather, or a gentle rain,

are quite enough to decide many mothers to keep her at home. The boy has his warm clothing. His feet and legs are well protected. The girl is but half clad. Half her limbs are exposed to the weather, protected only by stockings none too thick, the necessary under garments, in the majority of cases, being omitted. This difference fixes a point of departure for the cultivation of the greater sensitiveness of the girl. The ignorant mother but little realizes the amount of physical vigor it costs an insufficiently-clad girl to keep warm. And so, while the boy acquires a growing hardihood, an indifference to changes in the weather, and is ready to eat at any hour of the day, the girl becomes delicate, shrinks from cold, her appetite is as sensitive as the thermometer, her cheek loses its rosy hue. Thus her life goes on, steadily increasing its divergence from that of the boy. He becoming square-shouldered, straight and sturdy; she, stooping, round-shouldered and sensitive. I do not include every girl in this picture. I refer, simply, to the average girl of America, whose training does not develop her original vigor, but transforms a constitution, as fine in every sense as the boy's, into a tangle of fretted nerves: and this is the average American girl. "And yet in this country," says Dr. Clarke, "women possess a greater share of personal liberty and untrammelled independence than any women in the world, and should become the healthiest and best developed."

But in America, as the girl passes through those years which lead her to the door of womanhood, she is encouraged, or, at least, allowed, to fashion her manner, and dress, and thought, after those of young women. She assumes the corset, the high-heeled boots, the flimsy head-dress; weights her hips with clothing which should be carried by the shoulders. Finds it unladylike to run, and shout, and frolic. Clamors for the evening party, the theatre, the ball, and gets them all. How more quickly can be killed the sweet and unconscious simplicity of childhood? What more certain manner of sapping her health and injuring her physique? From this time forward she is almost her own mistress. "Our girls rule themselves," says Miss Brackett.

I can only sketch the wrong and suggest the right way. But I would especially emphasize a wrong which, in cases without number, works sad and lifelong harm. And that is the mistake of keeping our girls in ignorance of their physical structure; the deeply-rooted prejudice which forbids their instruction in feminine physiology and the manifold and complex changes of their development.

Let me now outline what, it seems to me,

should generally be the training of the girl, through infancy, childhood, and girlhood, to womanhood. I can merely set mile-posts, as it were, along the path a sensibly educated girl should follow. And this I shall do, principally, by showing the faults of existing methods.

Food.—From infancy our girl should be fed with great regularity. During the first year the physician should see to it that the mother does not become a mere fountain to the infant. That is, if an American mother be so happy as to be able to be a fountain to her child. If breast-milk be made the panacea for every ill and every complaint of the child, the mother becomes a weary slave, and the child's stomach will be temporarily, perhaps permanently, disordered. Quite apropos is the case of a child whose mother, from whom I had the story, was obliged to employ a wet nurse. One night the child was unusually restless and troublesome. The nurse said to the mother, "I cannot imagine why the baby isn't quiet. I have nursed her eleven times within an hour!" When the girl begins to eat other food than milk it should be carefully and nicely cooked. Poorly prepared food does much harm to children. In short, in this direction the physician should urge upon mothers the greatest care and simplicity. The custom is being introduced of giving children their dinners at evening, and just before sleep. All thoughtful physicians, I think, will condemn this fashion. Bread and milk should be the evening meal until the girl is at least ten years of age. When she begins to go to school, the mother should provide the recess lunch. The freedom with which our girls are allowed to patronize the confectioner and pastry cook, is a great and injurious evil, and should be forbidden. For if the commissariat department of the body become disordered, I need not say what the general effect will be. I will merely add that the prevalent habit among girls, of constant eating, in and out of season, is an indication of poorly regulated hygiene in the home. I have just heard of a school girl whose recess bun-bill amounted, in no long space of time, to thirteen dollars!

Mothers should be told, however, that a child's wakefulness at night and the exhaustion of the girl after evening study may often be conquered by simple food.

Dress.—During the tender years of infancy and childhood the girl should be dressed in garments which will protect her against that rapid loss of heat which is a peculiarity of young children. Profuse expenditure of bodily heat is only another way of saying that the heat producing forces are working under high and exhausting pressure. For so long as she has any power, nature will keep a just equilibrium,

not only in the winds of heaven, but between the internal and external warmth of a child's body. What it costs the child for this wicked waste of warmth is soon told by its drooping look, loss of appetite and impairment of vigor. Although the actual fact is that children lose heat more rapidly and manufacture it less quickly than do adults, the contrary opinion largely prevails among the laity. Warmth is one of the child's most valuable possessions, and is a powerful factor in its growth and development. Waste it and you arrest the child's growth as certainly as if it were underfed. In every way, then, and by all possible precautions, the girl whose life we are tracing should be protected from undue loss of heat. One-half of all children die before they reach the age of five years. Too little warmth is one of the chief causes of this lamentable fact. On the other hand, too much clothing weakens and enervates. The happy medium so desirable in all the relations of life should be discovered and followed here. Every child, to a certain extent, is its own law. Concerning the faults of the girl's manner of dressing I have nothing to say; everybody is familiar with them.

Bathing.—In regard to bathing it is necessary to say merely that the laity, and perhaps many of our profession, do not realize the immense power of water, and that a certain degree of care in its use is needful. In some cases the bath quickly depresses the nervous system, especially if unwisely given before breakfast. Much harm, too, arises from ignorant use of it when the girl is in her adolescence. The physician and mother, then, should see that proper care is exercised.

Fresh Air, Exercise and Amusement.—Fresh and pure air in and out of the house is a *siné qua non* of good health. A sensible mother would naturally follow the careful physician's advice, to give infant children as much fresh air as is possible. Even during winter days it would be an error to keep our girl constantly in doors. Such care would be excessive, and while supposed to be a necessary protection, actually weakens the child, makes her sensitive, and renders her far more liable to contract throat and lung affections. A very cold day might be too severe, even for many adults. Judgment should be exercised. But in general the child may go out nearly every day, being frequently taken into the house for warmth during cold weather. From infancy, the air of the chamber and of the house in which our girl lives should be clean and fresh. The brightness of her brain should never be sullied by the deadening influence of an un-renewed atmosphere. Several of the American Health Primers, and notably Dr. Hartshorne's,

"Our Homes," will give the necessary information on this topic. This care should be extended to the school room, the too frequently impure air of which is an abundant cause of illness.

Give the girl equal opportunity with the boy to develop limb, muscle and lung, until the day comes when a change in her organism requires somewhat different treatment. She shall have her ball, her top, kite, sled, velocipede, her skates, her snow houses and all the fun, which is as much hers as it is the boy's. Nevertheless, we must be prepared to see that interesting phenomenon, the appearance of the purely feminine choice of amusement, which is one of the indications of the innate unlikeness of the girl to the boy. There are two kinds of exercise which our girls neglect—walking and horseback riding. An English girl takes her walk as regularly as she makes her toilet, and would as soon think of omitting one as the other. And the exhilarating and beneficial effects of the saddle are equally neglected by American and cultivated by English girls. But there are many mothers who are too full of other things to give their children proper thought. These mothers are apt to send little girls into the parks with nurses, who keep the children on their legs for hours together. Good sense will naturally keep the length of the walk within bounds. Let me say of the wholesome exercise of skating, that a girl can easily injure herself by prolonging it unwisely, especially in the early days of winter. The muscles should be gradually accustomed to the unusual strain. These remarks apply even with greater force to the girl of fourteen to nineteen. I believe great harm is a result of too much and too violent skating, not only to girls, but to boys as well. When weather confines the girl to the house she may use any form of light gymnastics, including dancing, which, when disconnected from late hours, over excitement and a dusty room, is an excellent form of exercise. But the excess to which American girls are permitted to go in this direction is more than reprehensible. They are allowed to attend dancing parties long before they leave school. This is all wrong. In general the girl remains late, dances beyond her power of endurance, excitement carrying her through. But the reaction of the next day shows what she has done. Is she ready for school, with bright eyes and rosy, rested face? Far from this, she probably loses her school, spends half the day in bed, and her mother fancies the girl can thus easily repair the loss she has sustained. Our girl may have her dance at home, but at a party not at all, until she has concluded her school life. And this, let me remark, is

the rule followed by the upper classes, who keep their girls in reserve until they introduce them into society at the close of school. But once in society these girls, all unused as they are to the strain of social dissipation, plunge into a vortex of engagements—dinners, lunches, parties, balls and theatre, crowding upon each other, with hardly a chink for rest. The result is that one or two seasons rob them of their bloom and brightness, and not only this, but they have exhausted the social pleasures by mere gluttony. A bright girl said to me the other day, "It seems to me the girls use up their good times pretty early;" and so they do. This form of insanity is peculiar to American girls, being permitted only in this country.

What becomes of their physique under such strain? In the majority of cases it simply collapses. But the more these foolish girls go, the more anxious are they to increase the number of their engagements. It becomes a competition, each one striving to outdo the other in social dissipation. What prices these girls have to pay for it! And where are the mothers? What share have they in this mad whirl of excitement! Some of them permit it, some of them encourage, many of them protest against it, but too many of them are powerless to prevent it. For, after the age of sixteen and seventeen, American girls, for the most part, are their own mistresses, and sorry guides they make. The day comes when they not only regret having expended their physical capital in two seasons, but they realize the complete loss of that sensation of freshness which every legitimate pleasure conveys, if only used in moderation. The physician is partially responsible for this state of things, while his protest should be emphatic against it. It is needless to say that such recklessness shall not enter into the training of the girl who is to be properly educated. No late parties for her, until school days are at an end, and by that time it may be hoped that the influence of a wise mother will have taught her common sense, even in her recreations. I will suggest that rowing, bowling, fencing—a superb form of gymnastics for girls—archery, and lawn tennis in proper moderation, are all beneficial means of improving the feminine physique. Exercise, however, should never be allowed to reach the stage of fatigue. Ability to prolong it will be increased by practice. The rule should be to stop so soon as the usual glow begins to lessen. It need not be said that no form of exercise should be allowed before breakfast. The blood is then at low tide, and gymnastics of any kind will cost more nervous vigor than they are worth. Let me recommend as a guide in home

gymnastics, Mr. Blaikie's book, "How to Get Strong and How to Keep so."

Sleep.—Of the girl's sleep no more need be said than that it should be plentiful, regular, and undisturbed. The fiat should be absolute. This will insure regular morning hours and no lingering in bed. It should be necessary only to remind mothers that sleep is not only brain food, but that it repairs waste and loss in muscle and nerve power.

Self-control.—One element as necessary in a girl's education as mental and physical culture is too frequently omitted. Indeed, its necessity is not often realized. This element is the self-control which it is the absolute duty of parents to teach their children, boys as well as girls. But even in their sports, boys win practical lessons in self-control which the girl fails to receive. And, moreover, the boy's nature is a protection against nervousness. It is considered perfectly natural, and not always improper, for the girl to give expression to mood and feeling, where a boy is expected to be manly and restrained. But in later years the girl becomes alive to the error, and when the task has grown well nigh gigantic, she begins that self-discipline which should have been a part of her education. The girl who from very tender years is taught that sweetness of manner, calmness and self-poise under the stress of disappointment, bodily pain, ungratified wish, and even grievous trial, are better, wiser, and nobler than anger, selfish peevishness, disagreeable moodiness, or indulgence in extreme feeling, will become that "noble woman, wisely planned," who in her turn can teach unselfishness, and the quiet, beautiful self-control which makes women womanly, and men manly. With such a foundation for her mental development, the girl becomes the true woman, such a woman as the Creator intended mothers should be.

But from her childhood give a girl freedom as to mood and feeling, and she soon becomes their slave. This means that she easily falls into the clutches of that *devil*, hysteria. And those of us who have seen the harm it does, those of us who have had to fight it in our patients, know how immensely difficult it is to free a girl from its grip. Even the young child can be taught that the so-called nervousness is something to be overcome, and no more allowable than anger or lying. Do anything and everything to give the girl a womanly self-control. Not only is *her* happiness largely dependent upon it, but so also is that of the home of which she is one day to become the centre, and in which hers should be the ennobling and guiding impulse. This self-command is especially necessary when she begins to mingle with the world, and feel its influence and temptations.

"All periods of transition are dangerous," says Herbert Spencer, "and the most dangerous is that from the restraint of the family circle to the non-restraint of the world. Hence, the importance of the policy which, alike by cultivating a child's faculty of self-restraint by continually increasing the degree in which it is left to its self-constraint, and by so bringing it step by step to a state of self-restraint, obliterates the sudden transition from externally governed youth to internally governed maturity." Such lessons are a noble preparation for the coming duties of womanhood and motherhood. And here, better than elsewhere, I may allude to the sad lack of respect to parents which is so common in this country. Our girls are allowed such freedom of action and opinion, that by the time they reach the age of sixteen too many of them control the mothers who should control them. This, of course, is partly due to the common manner of training our girls, but more to the weak and foolish submission of the mothers, who themselves have not had the proper training. Give the girl freedom of opinion, freedom in healthful desire and taste, but let this ever be in respectful and courteous submission to what *should* be the wiser influence of the mother. In her lack of experience the girl should have faith in counsels which oppose her desire to do that of which she cannot see the consequences. If the mother be weak, untutored, and undeveloped, the conditions are pitiful. Adopting the dictum of Spencer, "There should be a warm, filial affection, produced by consistent, parental friendship, which sympathizes with juvenile pursuits, avoids needless thwartings, and warns against evil consequences.

Education.—I will ask you to bear in mind that I am endeavoring to prove the need of a change in the training and education of the American girl. But I cannot give the minutiae of a new departure. You will have observed that, in the main, my paper is a criticism. It attempts to show the wrong, in order to suggest the right way. Consequently, when I approach the education of the girl, it is with no intention of presenting, *de novo*, an arbitrary system. It is rather with the purpose of showing what a girl's education should not include. I have already mentioned some of the errors of the moral training of girls, but you would not expect me to give details of what a moral education should be. In fundamental points we should be in accord, but in detail we should differ. There is a witty illustration of my meaning: "Iron," says the Professor at the Breakfast Table, "is essentially the same everywhere and always, but the sulphate of iron is never the same as the carbonate of iron. Truth

is invariable, but the Smithate of truth must always differ from the Brownate of truth." In respect, then, to the moral basis of the girl's education, I will, while reserving the privilege of criticism, merely express the hope that it will be true, simple, and sensible. Her intellectual education I likewise approach with diffidence, for, in the words of Herbert Spencer: "To educate rightly is no simple and easy thing, but a complex and extremely difficult thing; the hardest task which devolves upon adult life." And though I am speaking of the purely intellectual education, I do not for a moment mean to have you think I would separate the mental from the moral, or either of these from the physical training. Yet their isolation from each other, and the failure to realize the absolute necessity of their mutual coöperation, are very common, and do much harm. If we would avoid abnormal and unsymmetrical evolution, these forces must develop simultaneously, move together, go hand in hand. And the criticism of the physician would be necessary only when one of this triumvirate were found to be growing at the expense of the other two. "The growth of the plant," says Johannot, in his work on teaching, "proceeds systematically, symmetrically, and harmoniously. Stem, bud, leaf, flower, and fruit, come precisely in the succession necessary to accomplish the highest object of the plant. . . . An excessive forcing of stem or leaf will result in a limitation of flower and fruit. These organs, therefore, develop in due proportion without interference with each other, and, as a natural consequence, avoid loss or waste of force." Applying this illustration to education, he says: "The object of education, then, is to promote the normal growth of a human being, developing all his powers systematically and symmetrically, so as to give the greatest possible capability in thought and action. These powers must be trained to act harmoniously, so that there need be no waste of effort in any direction." "The question of compulsory education," says Huxley, "is settled, so far as Nature is concerned. Her bill on that question was framed and passed long ago. But like all compulsory legislation, that of Nature is harsh and wasteful in its operation. Ignorance is visited as sharply as willful disobedience; incapacity meets the same punishment as crime. Nature's discipline is not even a word and a blow, and the blow first, but the blow without the word. It is left to you to find out why your ears are boxed. . . . The object of what we commonly call education—that education in which man intervenes—is to make good these defects in Nature's methods; to prepare the child to receive Nature's educa-

tion neither incapably, nor ignorantly, nor with willful disobedience, and to understand the preliminary symptoms of her displeasure without waiting for the box on the ear."

But, in giving her mind its appropriate knowledge, we should not forget the period of life through which the girl is passing. Perceptive studies, or those which appeal to the senses, for childhood; studies which awaken the reasoning powers for a more advanced age, prepare the mind for the reflective studies of middle life. But without the preliminary treatment which develops the imagination and the reasoning powers, the judgments formed by the mind at middle age are apt to be faulty and unreliable, because there is an insufficient supply of the materials of thought.

This, according to the profoundest students of the best means of mental development, is the method which should be followed from childhood, in order to give the proper mental direction to later years.

Passing now to the age of twelve years, we find the girl going regularly to school, and forming acquaintance with schoolmates. But the mother should know where she is, and with whom, at all hours. And if she have won the girl's confidence, she can easily avert the injurious influence so harmful at this age. This is of absolute importance, for it is now that the girl's character, thoughts and feelings, are rapidly crystallizing into the form which is to endure.

"The clay is moist and soft, now, now make haste
And form the vessel, for the wheel turns fast."

In another direction, too, this is a critical age. It is now that the peculiar organization of the girl is beginning to assert itself. It is not enough to wait until nature has made her aware of her sex. What she has gained in physical vigor may all be lost, if in her work or play she be allowed to become unduly fatigued. The trainer never allows a young and spirited horse to be over driven and carelessly exposed. He knows what the effect of such treatment would be when the animal was called upon to show his best power. And it requires but little thought to see that over fatigue in any direction, during the years which immediately precede the announcement of sex, will detract from the girl's power to meet and bear the change. She shall rather be so trained that she will store up strength upon which she can hereafter draw in safety. It is at this early age, then, that I would have the mother begin those lessons in physiology which, apart from such general instruction in this subject as the girl may receive in school, will have an especial bearing upon her sex. The cruel preju-

dice against making a girl perfectly familiar with the changes she is approaching, is as wicked as it is thoughtless. Every day of our practice brings to our observation ills whose origin lies in this mistaken reticence. It not only injures our girls but the generations which follow them. This undoubtedly stands, *facile princeps*, the great error in the training of the American girl. She is allowed to approach her physical future blindfolded. One day she is a child. The next, all unprepared, in touching ignorance of the meaning of it all, she enters that world which we call womanhood. Shame upon American mothers, double shame upon American physicians, that this is permitted. This, my brother physicians, is the head and front of my essay. This includes all the rest. For, amazing as it may seem, in nearly all the works on education to which mothers have access, this subject is almost absolutely untouched. And who among us, whose solemn duty it is not merely to heal, but to prevent disease, how many of us see to it that the girls of the families which look to us for advice are properly prepared for this important change in their lives? Do you say, this should be the mother's care; such instruction it is her duty to impart? So be it. So say I. But what are the traditions of that mother's training? Was it not also *her* lot to find her way along the life path without that guiding influence which her mothers should have bestowed? Was *she* shielded and protected, by gentle thoughtfulness, from the dangers of ignorance at the critical age of her life? This lamentable hiatus in the training of American girls is not of to-day's creation, and generations may pass before the error is blotted out. For, the needed change in this direction must begin in the training of girls now growing into womanhood; and let it be with the hope that they, in their turn, will prepare their daughters for womanhood.

Last summer a case of chorea in a girl nearly thirteen years of age showed me the double necessity of preparing her mind for the physical change which was very near. The cultured mother objected, because the child was "so innocent," not realizing that this innocence was merely *ignorance*. I overcame her prejudice, which I found was due to the fact that she in her childhood was neglected, as she was neglecting her child. This is a typical but a sadly common case. In view of their undeniable need of physiological intelligence, it seems incredible that girls are thus purposely kept in ignorance of their own structure, and are permitted to grow up utterly unprepared for the varying stages of their development. But I believe we should find that three-fourths of our

female patients were not only ignorant of their physiology at this critical age, but, though cultured it may be in other respects, are still ignorant, even though they may be mothers.

Take the average girl of to-day, at the age of nineteen, we will say. This girl, who would blush if obliged to confess ignorance of Buddha, or Apelles, or some fourth-class character of mythology, will calmly admit that she not only knows nothing of the physiology of her functions, but that she is perfectly indifferent to such knowledge. This is a monstrous error; one into which our girl shall, by no means, be allowed to fall. She shall be so trained, between her twelfth and fourteenth years, as not only to be mentally but physically prepared for the metamorphosis which is coming to her. She is old enough to know how to live physiologically, and shall gradually be taught the great and divine meanings of womanhood. She shall be impressed with a feeling of reverence for her highest mission in life, in spite of as many women's rights doctrines as might fill the shelves of a Bodleian library. The women of to-day who are striving to put off and fly from the true mission of true women, remind one of the boy, who, in order to rid himself of an aching tooth, filled it with gunpowder, put a slow match to it, and then ran. The girl shall be taught that "if the boy is father of the man," the girl is mother of the man. From the age of twelve to the day of her marriage she shall be made to feel her responsibility toward her future, and those whose lives will, one day, be in her keeping.

I do not forget the admirable exceptions among our women; those who have dignified callings entirely disconnected from, and which exclude the duties of home and motherhood. All honor to them. They are free to follow their chosen path. But the typical woman, no matter how rare her culture, will not fail to confess that the deepest wish of her heart is to become the centre of a home, as wife and mother. It is her nature, and her mission. Where can she find a higher? She may wish to follow another way of life. She may be forced to do so. But I agree with a recent writer, who says: "A woman has a right to do everything she can do, provided she does nothing which will unfit her for bearing and rearing healthy children. It is pitiful to think there are multitudes who have no choice between employments which unfit them for motherhood and want. It is pitiful that there are mothers who live their whole married lives in conditions which utterly unfit them for the functions of maternity." The best rules of development for women who are to marry, will result equally to the best good of women who are not to marry. If the laws

are essential to one, they are to all. Let it be understood, however, that the duties of home do not deprive a woman of interest in matters outside the family. There is no better influence in social questions than that of an intelligent mother. Until her family is reared, however, the home and her children are her first and highest duty. "No woman," says Sidney Smith, "should forsake an infant for a quadratic equation." Upon the good health, the self care, the wise living of mothers, depends the future of our country. For, otherwise, how is our country to be provided with stalwart men, and noble, vigorous women?

It is only too true, that in the past and present of many nations, woman has been so misunderstood and unappreciated, that a revolt has caused many to swing to the other extreme. The true mission of women is not to be "merely a cradle and a grave," as Miss Brackett too bitterly says, but that nobler being, in whom lies the best hope of our race.

"One of Nature's ends, or, rather, her supreme end," says Spencer, "is the welfare of posterity." "The first requisite to success in life," says another, "is to become a good animal." Paraphrasing Herbert Spencer, I would say, that to have a nation of good mothers is the first requisite of national prosperity. This is what should be impressed upon the American girl, and she should be taught that her share in this desirable result is to be attained only through conscientious care of her body and its functions. She cannot escape from herself. She cannot change her sex. The restlessness which is so common among our cultivated women is a mistaken and fruitless insubordination; an endeavor to escape the duties which are the glory, and should constitute the chief joy, of woman. Rebellion against them is a criticism upon her Creator.

The mother is the proper physiological teacher of the girl. But she can hardly accomplish this duty without help from the physician. In and through all this development of the girl's knowledge of herself, his influence should and must almost necessarily be felt. His duty it is to see that the mother clearly recognizes and understands hers.

The girl *will* know what is hidden behind the deplorable mystery which surrounds these subjects, and if she be not told by her mother, she will obtain her knowledge in garbled, imperfect and indelicate form, out of the home; and her modesty will thus be hurt, and her natural purity be tarnished. But if there be perfect openness between herself and her mother, if she be instructed in a frank and practical manner, the mystery disappears, the purity remains and the imagination of igno-

rance will be put at rest. Unbroken confidence between mother and daughter will, moreover, be to the latter a wall of defence against injurious influence. How mistaken mothers are in failing to establish this fearless trustfulness on the part of their daughters!

Our girl is now being fully prepared for the coming change in her physical being, and shielded and protected by the watchfulness of the mother. After she has crossed the threshold of her womanhood she shall be so guided that neither study, exercise nor amusement can interfere with the onward sweep and development of her physique. Like King Lemuel's ideal woman "she strengtheneth her arms, she girdeth her loins with strength." She shall be shown that, although she may have the studies of the boy, she cannot pursue them with the same unbroken regularity. If this be a disappointment let her be taught that underlying all the intellectual ambition of the growing girl should be submission to that higher law of sacrifice which every woman must recognize and accept if she would reach her best possibilities. This apparent loss becomes rich gain to her in the freshness of spirit and depth of receptivity with which she renews her work. And if she ask: "Am I to be irregular in study, am I to deny myself legitimate pleasure?" The reply should be: "Yes, if in that way you can attain a higher development."

One especial danger to which the girl might otherwise be exposed, viz: that of cultivating an unhealthy imagination, should be avoided by excluding all pernicious reading, in the shape of the fashionable novel, all conversation which her mother may not share, and moods and idleness which would lead to morbid introspection. In other words, by the use of a variety of means, her thought shall be kept bright, pure and healthful.

An error of the day is that a girl is expected to complete her education by her eighteenth year. An age at which lads are but little more than half way in theirs. Everything in the shape of culture is crowded into the years during which the girl should be cultivating the physical strength, common sense and practicality which are to be of life-long benefit to her and her descendants, while half the so-called culture with which fashionable education crams the girl is of little use and is quickly forgotten.

The women who constantly assert that the girl can study incessantly and without physical harm are simply mistaken. "Physical degeneration in girls," says Spencer, "is a result of excessive study. High pressure in education is worse for girls, because they are debarred from the vigorous recreation of boys, and thus the

evil is intensified." Less study and more exercise should be their rule. But the two may be so arranged that the girl will have a truer culture and a better development than if she be allowed to rush, at constantly increasing speed, through her curriculum of education. While confessing that women can work better when their occupation is frequently intermitted, Mary Putnam Jacobi thinks she has proved that only forty-six per cent. of women need periodical rest. I should be glad to question the remaining fifty-four per cent., and do not doubt that the minority would become the majority if duty were obeyed. I would make the rule absolute, that our girl's education should go hand in hand with, and not exceed, her physical growth. If this rule be disobeyed, as is the custom, especially among young women who are ambitious students, the education will be of little value, the physique, perhaps, of none at all. In his monograph on insanity, Dr. T. W. Fisher says "*Continued* study severely affects the health of young girls. They risk their lives at the *susceptible* period and break down afterward." Upon good health and upon the ability to perform her functions easily and naturally, depends, in a very large degree, the comfort and happiness of women in later years. Our girls rush through the years of their adolescence utterly regardless of the great need of intervals of rest. And if the careful mother or the watchful physician insist upon periodical repose, they submit to it most ungraciously and with an impatient criticism upon their sex which is pitiful. They try to live as if there *were* no swing of tide in their organism. They try to live down and put under reckless foot the necessities of their sex. But it is the old fight with windmills, with this difference: Don Quixote recovered from his hurts; but they, in too many cases, never do. And yet, when the day comes, they do not hesitate to assume the office of maternity, and thus, as a result of their foolishness and the indifference of their mothers, they bequeath misery unto the third and fourth generation. Influential women write that girls do not need periodical rest. That if, forsooth, they but observe the laws of health, they can go straight on, like men. Query: What are the laws of health? The trouble is that laws which are essential to their well being women consider arbitrary.

A fair reply to these mistaken advisers is the court scene between Choate and Webster. Choate's client claimed that the patent car-wheel of the defendant was an infringement upon his, and Choate, with brilliant eloquence, occupied three days in proving that the new wheel in no way whatever was an improvement upon the original wheel. When Webster rose

to reply, the court was crowded in expectation of a superb exhibition of forensic power. With one magnetic glance Mr. Webster took in the entire jury, then tilting upon the table the models of the two wheels, he said: "Gentlemen of the jury, here are the two wheels. Look at 'em." He won his case. In this way I would have a medical jury decide the case before us. I would bring before them a girl who has been properly reared and a girl of the high-pressure system, and say: Look at them!

I can mention two women, honored by our sex as well as their own, who are largely responsible for the present restlessness of many of their sisters. They are noble, cultured women, of great influence. One of them confessed to a patient of mine, that last year nervous exhaustion nearly made her insane, and incidentally remarked that at her last confinement she sent off her proof sheets, and at the same moment called for doctor and nurse. You would be surprised if I told you her name. The other admitted that in spite of all she had said in public, touching the rights of women, her persistent, unrestful labor had so exhausted her, that she had modified her views, but would not confess it to any man living, and would not have the public know of it for the world. I could quote other equally significant confessions. These cases are only a fresh suggestion of the battle with the windmills. It would seem as if these women ought to know the exact sense and weight of what they affirm and teach. But do they realize the actual condition of our young girls, and is this condition entirely due to mistakes in dress and party going? Do we physicians not know there is another side?

When our girl reaches her teens, she is developing her mind, learning the meanings of life and preparing herself for it. She shall *not* be crushed under 'ologies, languages and music. She shall cultivate them, but have only three studies where girls now have six. She shall never study more than two hours without recreation, and never become exhausted by mental strain. She shall have the periodical rest of the German girl, who is so reared that she does not dream of imitating the insane self neglect which is permitted among American girls, who dance till morning, attend parties and theatre night after night, when they not only should be in quietude, but while they are still at school. Their studies, too, are pursued at this time without let or hindrance. My friends, this cannot and never will be done without exaction of a heavy payment in health. Our very climate renders the girl less able to bear the strain than that of the German girl, who knows better than submit herself to it.

But what shall be the character of this rest? Shall it be of the same kind and length for all girls? I should say not. For the individual girl the physician or a wise mother may decide. But at this time every girl should have either absolute rest of proper duration for her case, or her life should be so modified by partial relief from study and the substitution of some labor less exacting, that in the end she will not have lost ground. The girl who seems to receive no harm from an unchanging mode of life, and there are such, is developing herself on the credit system. The day will come when she will be surprised by finding herself a physical bankrupt, and with few or no assets. To quote Miss Brackett: "It is only Micawber's old statement: 'Amount of income, twenty pounds; annual expenditure, twenty pounds, ought, six; result, misery.'" This, in the majority of such cases, is as fixed as any law of Mede or Persian.

At the present day, too, our girls exhaust all the pleasures and amusements, long before they assume the duties of life. This is a shrewd method of depriving themselves of that freshness and restfulness which should be an element of their recreation. Moderation is the keynote of *any* pleasure. It ever has something in reserve.

The domestic culture which but few American brides carry into their own homes shall be steadily developed in the girl we are following. This shall include, as opportunity offers, instruction in helpful, quick, and ready skill in the sick room, and in the care of children. To entertain gracefully, and to converse well, should be a part of her education. Moreover, she shall be shown that home-life is the most beautiful of all. She shall never be allowed to feel that its duties are drudgery. This is a feeling far too prevalent. A distinguished editor recently said to me: "I am a journalist, and suppose I belong to a class of men considered influential, but when I compare my work with that of my wife in the management of the home and her children, it seems contemptible. Men are bread-winners, but women are world-makers. Men's work weighed by theirs sinks into insignificance, and yet they call it drudgery." And Johannot endorses these ideas when, after speaking of the necessity of the education of the mother, he says: "This view of the nature of woman's work, and of the preparatory culture necessary to the highest performance of that work, sets aside at once and forever all those contracted views of woman's sphere and education which are so frequently urged with an air of great profundity and wisdom." All this should be impressed upon the growing girl. The work of men, no

matter in what calling, is as full of monotony as the duties of home, but its intrinsic value is not to be compared with the work of mothers. Men cannot do the home-work. They are mere bread-winners. Woman is the true home ruler. "Even the eminent women I have met," says Miss Cobbe, "are invariably proud of their housekeeping." God has clearly marked out the path of woman. Be it hers to ennoble and make it beautiful.

The self-control, the great need of which I have already made apparent, shall continue to be one of the daily lessons of the girl who is now so rapidly approaching womanhood. I would not exclude men in the need of this lesson. But they are not emotional, as women are. The woman's emotional nature is one of the beauties of her character, but its existence creates the need of a separate effort for self-control. Self-control has a most powerful influence in the best development of the girl's nervous system, which, exquisitely sensitive by nature, becomes her tyrant, makes her willful, irritable, and capricious; teaches her to convert trifles into tragedies, motes into beams, and good sense into hysteria, unless she has already been taught equability under all stress, whether severe or of the mere mosquito order. Moreover, she shall see that the intensity which the women of to-day expend, not only on serious work, but upon mere trifles as well, is a wasteful expenditure of invaluable nerve-power. Well-balanced mental power is always calm. The emotions are over-cultivated in our women. Extravagance in this direction undoubtedly destroys deep feeling. There should not be too much foliage for the trunk. The girl should be taught to laugh at the trifling irritants of daily life. She should be shown that the habit of "worrying," which seems peculiar to our women, is the idlest and most wasteful of moods. More than this, one who worries is a disturber of the peace. Teach the girl that mental sunshine costs less than cloud, and pays far more. It not only makes her loveable, but it reacts, as does all mental influence, upon her body, giving it firmer fibre, greater ease of movement, and greater power of resiliency under strain.

The suggestions I have made bring the girl to the close of school days, at which time, if her life be not systematized, she is thrown upon herself, and her daily query is, "What shall I do with myself?" If she pursue her studies in a college, the question of co-education introduces itself. I have no time for it, and if I had, I should merely fall back upon the opinion already expressed, that the average girl cannot study as boys do, and that no girl should undertake it. Even in our high schools,

I think the studies of the girl should be differently arranged from those of the boy.

If the girl have completed her school experience, she is simply ready to solidify and increase her culture. Her time is not to be filled with mere pleasure and idleness. "Genteel idleness," crisply says Miss Cobbe, "is a stupid notion, and should be swept out of existence." Her days are to be wisely spent in cultivating practical as well as polite information. This is a period of great importance to the girl. One in which there should be co-operation between her mother and herself. She should now have domestic duties, which will give her a share in household work.

Moreover, during these years I would have her cultivate some especial branch of study—language, music, art, bookkeeping, stenography—in such form that she may either teach or make practical use of her knowledge. For the day may come when she will need its aid. Much suffering arises from the lack, in the education of our girls, of that which can be made useful, and save them from want. If her circumstances oblige her to go directly into some kind of work, it will be sad if it be anything which will impair her vigor. She has not yet entered upon the highest duties of her life, but if they come to her it will be found that her training has given her a wise preparation.

In all this training of the girl the watchful physician will find much that it is his duty to

impart. I must especially emphasize the need of more fearlessness between our girls and their physicians. There is too much shamefaced reticence on their part, where there should be simple and unreserved frankness. To this end the physician must lend his aid. His frankness will win her confidence, and his thoroughness will go to the root of any cause which has brought, or is likely to bring illness upon her. But no physician should foster that "deadly concentration" of thought upon her bodily weaknesses which ruins many a girl, or at least develops the worst of conditions. Hypnotics are too readily given her, when wiser means might secure the desired end. The physician should stand between the girl and all tendency to self-pampering in slight indisposition. He should rather arouse her to something outside herself, and teach her that "invalidism is a blunder." He will thus half conquer the temporary ailment. Sometimes it is necessary for him to arrange the girl's time, even to giving her practical work, and fire her with honest interest in something of real value to others as well as herself.

A wise education of girls becomes a needed culture of mothers. Without this we can never hope to secure wiser and better conditions for daughters.

It may be I have left many points untouched, but I promised only mile-posts, and these I trust have made my meaning clear.

